

**WORLD HEALTH DAY**  
**THEME**

: 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2015  
: FOOD SAFETY

Main causes of food borne illnesses are :- Bacteria, Viruses, Parasites, Prions, Chemicals.

Symptoms of Food-borne illnesses :- Diarrhoea, Abdominal Cramps, Nausea and Vomiting.

Incubation Period (time between exposure to the pathogen and onset of symptoms) :- Several hours to one week.

**FIVE KEYS/CORE INFORMATION TO SAFER FOOD :-**

**1. Keep clean :-**

- Wash your hands before handling food and often during food preparation.
- Wash your hands before eating, after going to the toilet, after handling raw meat or poultry, after changing baby's nappy, after blowing your nose, after handling rubbish, after handling chemicals, after playing with pet animals, after smoking. Dry your hands thoroughly with clean dry towel/paper towel.
- Wash and sanitize all surfaces and equipment used for food preparation.
- Protect kitchen areas and food from insects, pests and rodents. Keep food covered or in close containers. Keep rubbish bins covered and remove the rubbish regularly, use baits or insecticides to kill pests, rodents and repair walls holes.

**2. Separate raw and cooked food :-**

- Separate raw meat, poultry and seafood from other foods.
- Use separate equipment and utensils such as knives and cutting boards for handling raw foods.
- Store food in containers to avoid contact between raw and prepared foods.
- In the refrigerator, store raw meat, seafood and poultry below cooked food to avoid cross-contamination.
- Store food in containers with lids to avoid contact between raw and prepared foods.
- Wash plates used for raw foods.
- Use a clean plate for cooked foods.

**3. Cook thoroughly :-**

- Cook food thoroughly, especially meat, poultry, eggs and seafood. Cook eggs and seafood until piping hot.
- Make soups and stews by boiling to minimum of 70° C for atleast 1 minute.
- Reheat cooked food; hot food hot (60°C+), cold food cold (5°C or lower).
- Microwave oven can cook unevenly and leave cold spots where dangerous bacteria can survive. Ensure that food cooked in microwave oven is at a safe temperature.
- Plastic containers release toxic chemicals upon heating and should not be used in the microwave to heat food.
- Cook poultry until the juices are clear and the inside is no longer pink.

**4. Keep food at safe temperatures :-**

Do not leave cooked food at room temperature for more than 2 hours.

Refrigerate promptly all cooked and perishable food below 5°C. Explore options other than refrigeration to lower the temperature (dig a hole, use cold water etc.)

Keep cooked food piping hot (more than 60°C) prior to serving.

Do not store food too long even in the refrigerator. If safe storage is not feasible, use fresh food.

Do not thaw frozen food at room temperature. Microwave ovens can be used to thaw food, but can leave warm spots where microorganisms can grow. Food thawed in the microwave oven should be cooked promptly.

Promptly cool and store leftovers.

Prepare food in small amounts to reduce the amount of leftovers.

Leftover food should not be stored in the refrigerator for longer than 3 days and should not be reheated more than once.

**5. Use safe water and raw materials :-**

- Use safe water or treat it to make it safe.
- Select fresh and wholesome foods.
- Choose foods processed for safety such as pasteurized milk.
- Wash fruits and vegetables especially if eaten raw.
- Do not use food beyond its expiry date.
- Safe water is needed to :- wash foods and vegetables, add to food, make up drinks, make ice, clean cooking and eating utensils and wash hands.
- When buying food select fresh and wholesome food; avoid food that is rotten; choose foods processed for safety such as pasteurized milk or irradiated meat; throw away smashed, swollen and oxidized cans.

**(Dr. Sunil)  
Chief Medical Officer**